

Education Governance Responses
Bradford Meeting (5/3/07) – Oxbow Union High School

14 Attendees (facilitated by Robin Scheu)

Question #1: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the present education governance system in your community?:

Advantages

Direct community contact
Fair representation
Local budget by locals
Close geographically to school
In-town local rep
Choice to change those reps
School is community center
Local boards present opportunities for local lay people to be familiar with school/education and community issues
Local board hires the principal
Local board – evaluation of staff & is involved in evaluations when recommended by supt.
Local people own and control the physical facilities/buildings.
Local board has some manner of control over supt. vis-à-vis local school district issues

Disadvantages

Oxbow not necessarily fair representation
Not having rep on the high school board
Redundancies
Inefficiencies
Lack of cross boarder opportunities
Too many meetings for superintendent.
Local citizens have no idea about what goes on at SU meetings
Hard to get across-the-board, consistency of curriculum
Hard to get agreement for students to attend nearby schools/out of district
Too much artificial bureaucracy that prevents logical cooperation between town & school
Keeping track of students' residences

Question #2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the school district model suggested by Commissioner Cate in his White Paper?

Advantages

Fewer meetings for superintendents
Greater potential equity by having a common vision on board
More administrative efficiency
PreK-12 curriculum
Clarify role of principal
Ability to share equipment, e.g. special needs

Disadvantages

Particularly not good for OESU because of unified SD, a union SD, and town School District and incorporated district.

Not cost savings – eliminates volunteers

Loss of local control

Fewer reps per citizen

Increase in SU costs/expenses

Less democracy

Eliminates all strengths of local boards - see existing system adv. List

Town with weaker voice (rep) would create inequity or disadvantage for that school

Potential loss of school choice

Too many potential loose ends/changes not imagined

Inequity in current SU make-up (BMU vs. North Country)

Possible to lose state funding due to a skew in statistics

Hard to imagine a weighted vote: politicking

Loss of community involvement

Pure unfettered school choice (across boundaries?)

Debrief Comments:

If we do the larger one district board, mechanism needed to maintain local flavor:
school/community council

Funding for innovative projects

Professional grant writer

Lack of comfort level for community input to board

Need an ombudsman (?) to facilitate (not gate keeper)

Have two co-superintendents so each supt has manageable number of school boards

Reduce DOE paperwork requirements for SU's.

Join with other states and sue the federal government

State take over health insurance for all school employees

Maintain local school boards

Encourage greater cooperative purchasing where economical, incl. tech support

Encourage collaboration between school districts

Allow school choice between town public schools

Provide transportation where public school choice is allowed